

STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS

June 18, 1968

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The Hon. Fred Harris
United States Senator
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Fred:

I know you must be the busiest man in the country right now, but I hope you will have time to read a few observations on the campaign from what is perhaps a slightly different source than most of the ones you are exposed to.

I believe that Humphrey could make a great President. But first he has to be elected, and second, the breadth of his statesmanship will inevitably be shaped by the cadre of staff that he attracts to his leadership. I am taking it for granted that he will win the nomination and, may I add, nothing would give me greater confidence than to see you accept the place as his running mate. But I do not see how he is going to be able to win the election without sparking the enthusiasm of the liberal and of the have-not groups who impelled the Kennedy candidacy. He is just not doing that, and indeed, I am surprised by how many of my own friends and contacts profess that they will probably vote for Nixon rather than Humphrey if the battle is drawn that way!

Whether they will remain so disaffected through the campaign can of course be doubted, but Humphrey will need not only their votes, but their energetic support, and there is not that much time to lose in trying to win it.

I am perhaps more sympathetic than most of them about the dilemma that faces an incumbent Vice President. I also realize that the campaign will probably take a very different course after the conventions. I have therefore been trying to think of steps that may be politically possible at just this moment that may help set the campaign in a more decisive direction. May I offer just these observations:

I do not think that attempts to recruit scientists and engineers and the like for Humphrey is going to be very successful at this stage of the game. Why should "we" make a public commitment on behalf of a candidate who has refused to make his own public commitments during his incumbancy! He was an admirable Senator, and, as I stated before, I think I could see the makings of a great President, but he certainly has not shown himself to be the great leader and educator on public issues that I would expect of that office. On the other hand, there must be a great many academic people who would not stint in offering their services as a brains trust like the one that served both Kennedys during their respective campaigns. Seek that advice and give any sign that it is occasionally listened to, and the support will naturally come thereafter!

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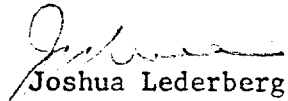
There are a great many of Senator Kennedy's former supporters, and others who have contributed to the McCarthy campaign, who feel they have no place to go at the present time. Don't let them flounder! Seek them out and pump their brains!

These steps would probably generate their own solutions to the other problems. There are any number of creative suggestions that can be made about urban affairs, and while it might be better to wait until after the conventions to spell them out in greater detail, it is obvious that a great deal of imagination and staff work ought to precede the public statements.

Meanwhile there are still large areas of foreign policy, some of them representing the very best that the Johnson administration has been able to develop, that Humphrey should be quite free to expand upon, and which will clearly set his liberal thinking apart from those of the conservative camp. I allude to one of these issues, the ABM program, that I think may be a paradigm of this area of policy. This is a matter of the utmost importance about which the public needs to be more deeply educated if Congress is to cooperate wisely with a liberal administration. Humphrey could do a great deal to establish his own intellectual credentials by expanding on just these issues. The development of this theme is also likely to capture the interest and support of a great many scientists and engineers who at the moment remain on the sidelines.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely yours,


Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics